

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that claims 2-5, 9, 11-14 and 17 define patentable subject matter. Claims 2, 9 and 14 have been rewritten in independent form and each of these claims, as well as claims 3, 4 and 5 which depend from claim 2, are believed to be in condition for allowance. Independent claims 1 and 18 have been amended as set forth herein.

Claim 1

Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite an apparatus for blow molding a fuel tank which has a mold defining a mold cavity and having an opening communicating with the mold cavity, a blow pin through which a pressurized gas may flow, the blow pin being movable between an extended position received at least in part in the mold cavity and communicating with the mold cavity and a retracted position removed from the mold cavity, and a pinch plate assembly movable between an open position spaced from the opening of the mold and a closed position adapted to engage fuel tank material in the area of the opening and close the material on itself forming a seam. An opening in a blow molded fuel tank, created by the blow pin during the blow molding process, is closed, and a portion of the blow pin when in its extended position is disposed in the path of movement of the pinch plate assembly and when in its retracted position, is out of the path of movement of the pinch plate assembly.

The Gilbert reference as applied to claim 1

Gilbert discloses a plastic molding apparatus having a blow pin 20 that is received in a guide 52 and in a flash section of a parison. The pin 20 remains outboard of the mold cavity in which the plastic article is formed, and outboard of a pinch seam formed in the article. Further, the pin is not in the path of movement of any pinch plate assembly in any of its positions.

For at least these reasons, claim 1 as amended defines novel and patentable subject matter over Gilbert and the other cited references, whether they are considered alone or in combination.

Dependent Claims 6-8, 10, 12, 13 and 15-17

Each of dependent claims 6-8, 10, 12, 13 and 15-17 is ultimately dependent upon claim 1 and defines patentable subject matter for at least those reasons set forth with regard to claim 1.

Independent Claim 18

As amended, claim 18 recites a method for blow molding a fuel tank comprising the steps of placing a parison within a mold defining a mold cavity; providing a blow pin in the mold cavity and an interior of the parison and providing a pressurized gas into the parison forcing the parison against the mold in the mold cavity; removing the blow pin from the fuel tank material leaving an opening in the fuel tank material through which the blow pin was extended into the interior of the parison prior to removing the blow pin; moving pinch plates from an open position to a closed position to engage the fuel tank material around said

opening in the fuel tank material from which the blow pin was removed and close said opening; and removing the molded fuel tank from the mold cavity.

As noted above, Gilbert fails to teach, disclose or even suggest a molding method that provides a portion of a blow pin in a mold cavity in which a parison is formed, or a method wherein pinch plates are moved from an open position to a closed position to engage the fuel tank material around said opening in the fuel tank material from which the blow pin was removed. In Gilbert, the pinch seam is formed downstream of the blow pin, or, in other words, the blow pin in Gilbert remains outboard of the pinch seam and outboard of the mold cavity area in which the article is formed. Instead, the blow pin in Gilbert remains in a flash section of its mold and parison. For at least these reasons, claim 18 is novel and patentable over Gilbert and the other cited references whether they are taken alone or in combination.

Dependent Claims 19-23

Each of dependent claims 19-23 is dependent upon claim 18 and is therefore patentable for at least those reasons set forth with regard to claim 18.

New Claims 24 and 25

New claims 24 and 25 are dependent upon claims 14 and 9, respectively, and are therefore patentable for at least those reasons set forth with regard to claims 14 and 9. Claim 24 recites an additional feature of the carrier arm that is not disclosed in the cited references.

Claim 25 recites an orientation of the diamond shaped blow pin that is not disclosed in the cited references.

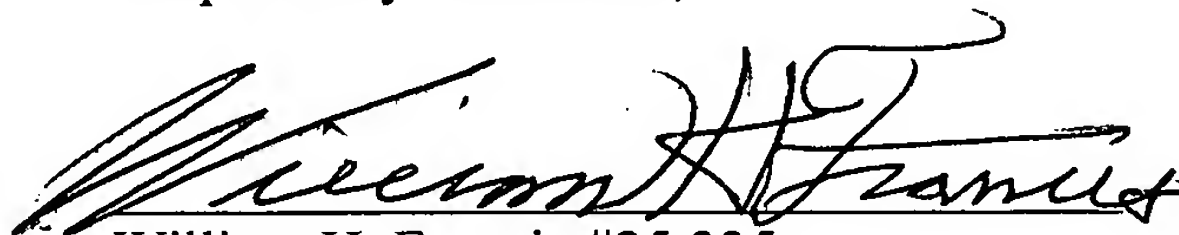
CONCLUSION

Each of claims 1-25 as set forth herein is believed to define patentable subject matter and to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of these claims is respectfully requested.

If, after considering this response, the Examiner believes any of the claims are not in a condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner initiate a telephone interview with Applicants' undersigned attorney, Matthew J. Schmidt, whose telephone number is (248) 689-3500, so immediate consideration can be given to any further amendment suggested by the Examiner or needed to place all of the claims in condition for allowance.

We are enclosing a check for \$500.00 to cover the cost of the two additional independent claims and two dependent claims added in this Response. If there are any other fees due, it is hereby authorized and respectfully requested that any fees due be charged to our Deposit Account No. 50-0852.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William H. Francis", is written over a horizontal line.

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